



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **KANSAS MAN SENTENCED TO NEARLY 32 YEARS FOR ARMED BANK ROBBERY, CARJACKING, FIREARMS VIOLATIONS**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Shawnee, Kan., man was sentenced in federal court today for armed bank robbery, as well as attempted carjacking and the use of a firearm in a crime of violence.

**Cleophus Darnell James**, 42, of Shawnee, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Nanette K. Laughrey this afternoon to 31 years and 10 months in federal prison without parole.

On May 20, 2005, **James** pleaded guilty to charges contained in a Sept. 7, 2004, federal indictment. **James** admitted that he used a firearm to steal \$15,000 from the Bank of America, 661 N.W. 55<sup>th</sup> Terrace in Kansas City, Mo., on Aug. 12, 2004, and attempted to carjack a vehicle while making his getaway.

**James** entered the bank carrying a .45-caliber semi-automatic handgun, Graves said, which he fired into the ceiling as he yelled at everyone to get down on the floor. **James** raced around the bank, ordering the tellers to hurry and firing a second shot into the ceiling. **James** jumped onto the teller counter ordered the tellers to place money in a black nylon bag. Then he leaped off the counter and ran out of the bank, dropping some of the money as he ran.

A bank customer saw the robbery in progress and tried to block **James** from leaving by moving his car in front of **James'** Chevrolet Corsica. **James** pointed the gun at him and told him to move his car or he would shoot him. When the bank customer moved his car, **James** drove westbound on Englewood Road, swerving through traffic and running a red light. The bank customer followed him.

**James** turned southbound on Highway 169 and accelerated to a high rate of speed.

Several miles later, just north of the Kansas City Municipal Airport, the Corsica began to smoke heavily and then lost power. **James** abandoned the car in the right lane and began running northbound in the southbound lane of the highway toward cars which had slowed or come to a stop. As he ran, **James** waved his gun at the traffic. He ran toward a 1995 Infiniti G-20, pointing his gun at the driver in an effort to take over the vehicle, but the driver instead accelerated toward **James**. **James** jumped out of the way and fired his gun at the vehicle as it passed, striking the car at the rear passenger side door.

**James** then spotted his nephew driving a GMC Yukon. **James** waved down his nephew, then got into the driver's seat of the Yukon and drove to a residence in Kansas City, Kan., where they were later arrested by law enforcement officers.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Linda Parker Marshall and Daniel Nelson. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at  
[www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow)